

Sample Filing System for Small Communities

The records management system should be included in the policy and procedure manual for your organization for reference and training purposes. Most small communities use subject filing system arranged alphabetically. The steps to set up this type of system are:

1.) Sort the records into category headings such as:

- Financial – Examples are records that document fiscal transactions needed for financial management, budgeting, and audit purposes.
- Legal – Examples are the records that document the contractual obligations of the organization, land titles, and attorney advice.
- Managerial – Examples are policies and procedures, management reports and records that provide direction on how operations are handled.
- Operational – Examples are documents that provide information on day to day operations of the organization
- Historical – Examples are incorporation documents, minutes, and records that document what has gone on in the past.

2.) Break down each category into sub-categories of the topic, such as:

Financial

Accounts Receivable (Customer Records)
Accounts Payable
Budgets
Audits
Financial Reports
Payroll Records
Current Grant Files

Legal

Land Records
Contracts
Agreement
Employee Files

Managerial

Agency Correspondence
Current Project Files

Operational

Buildings
Equipment

Historical

Council Meeting Minutes
Photos

3.) Create a written index of the categories and sub-categories (Note: this list will requiring updating as new activities occur).

- 4.) **Create hanging folders with labels for each sub-category** and place the hanging folders in alphabetical order into the appropriate filing cabinet. In addition to drawer labels, an index of what files are in each drawer should be taped to the outside of the cabinet.
- 5.) **FILE THE DOCUMENTS regularly.** A filing system does not work if it is not used regularly. Maintaining a filing system is an on going process. Include this task on a daily time schedule, selecting at least one to two hours a day for this task.
- 6.) **Store or throw away documents that are no longer needed** for reference or day to day operations. In addition to records management and equally important to maintaining a good filing system is archiving of records. When doing this it is **important** to have a clear idea about what documents need to be kept. This system can be created and suited for the type of files you are working with using the State's Local Government Records Retention Schedule as a guide.